25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW X-MEN

MARVEL® COMICS

#2 of 5

CLAREMONT
WEIN
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X-MEN®
BLACK SUN™

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STORM®

X-MEN BLACK SUN

SECOND SPELL: SPEAR THE ANGEL!

LIMBO:
THE YOUNG LADY ON THE GROUND IS KITTY PRYDE, SOMETIMES CALLED SHADOWCAT.
KITTY IS AN X-MAN, BORN WITH THE MUTANT ABILITY TO PHASE HER BODY THROUGH SOLID MATTER. RIGHT NOW, KITTY COULDN'T BE MORE CONFUSED --
-- BECAUSE THE ARMORED YOUNG WOMAN BEFORE HER, BISECTING THE N'GARAI DEMON WITH HER ENCHANTED SOULSWORD, APPEARS FOR ALL THE WORLD TO BE KITTY'S DEAREST FRIEND ILLYANA RASPUTIN, ALSO KNOWN AS MAGIK.
BUT ILLYANA RASPUTIN IS LONG DEAD, A VICTIM OF THE LEGACY VIRUS!
ISN'T SHE?
ILLYANA?!? BUT HOW?!

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WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT **LATER**. RIGHT NOW, LET'S WORRY ABOUT **YOU!**
HOW ARE YOU **FEELING?**
CONSIDERING I'VE JUST HAD MY **SOUL** LITERALLY TORN FROM MY BODY?
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I'VE FELT **WORSE**.
I'D HOPED TO REACH YOU **BEFORE** BELASCO PUT HIS PLAN INTO ACTION.
FORGIVE ME.
YOU'RE **KIDDING,** RIGHT?
I JUST WANT TO KNOW **WHY** BELASCO DID THIS TO ME!
WHY DID HE CALL ME HIS **CATSPAW?**
I FEAR IT GOES BACK TO THE X-MEN'S **FIRST** ENCOUNTER WITH BELASCO --
-- WHEN YOU AND THE X-MEN CAME TO LIMBO IN SEARCH OF ILLYANA THE **CHILD** --
"-- AND INSTEAD ALL FELL **VICTIM** TO BELASCO'S ARCANE POWERS.
"ENCASING YOU IN AN **ELDRITCH CRYSTAL,** BELASCO MAGICALLY **REMOVED** YOUR VERY **SKELETON** --
"-- REQUIRING AN AGING **STORM** TO USE HER OWN NEWLY-GAINED SORCEROUS TALENTS TO **REINTEGRATE** YOUR SKIN AND BONE.
"WHAT BELASCO DID **NOT** REVEAL, HOWEVER, WAS THAT HIS CRYSTAL WAS SECRETLY ETCHED WITH A **SPELL OF DOMINION** --
"-- WHICH **BONDED** WITH YOUR SKELETAL FRAME UPON YOUR **RESTORATION.**
"IT WAS **THAT** SPELL WHICH BELASCO USED TO BRING YOU **HERE.**"
YOU'RE SAYING THAT ANY TIME BELASCO WANTED ME **BACK** HERE, ALL HE HAD TO DO WAS **SNAP HIS FINGERS?**
OH, THAT'S JUST **SWELL.**
WHAT HAS THAT MONSTER **DONE** TO ME?

Seemingly centuries ago in Uncanny X-Men #160. -- Mike

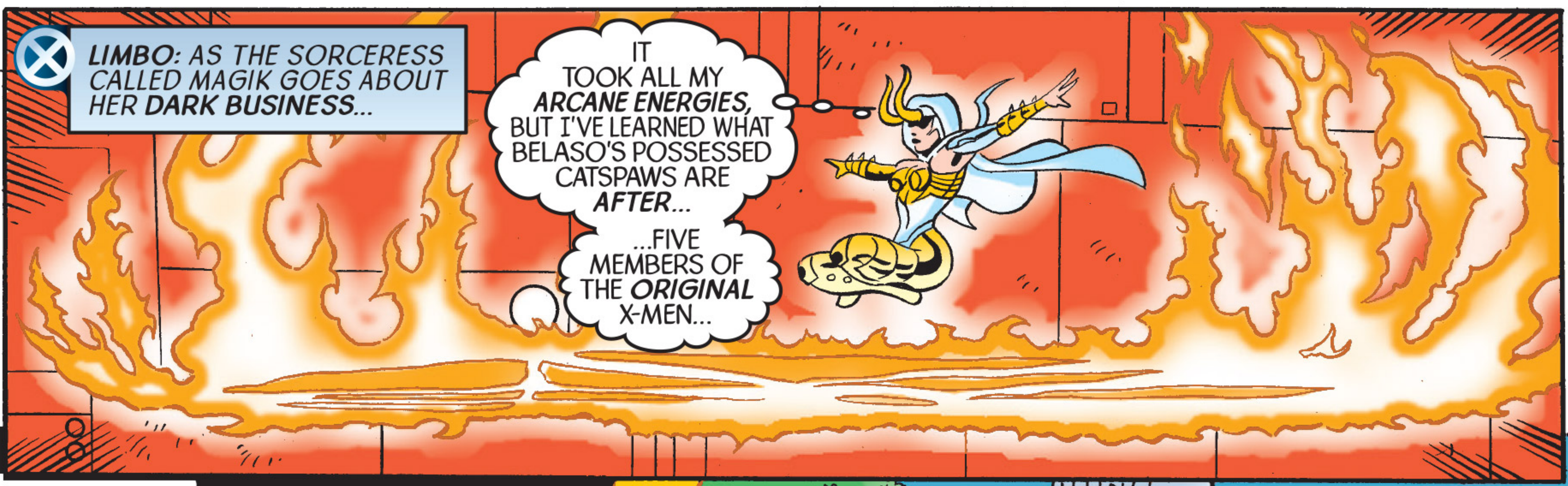
Last issue. -- M

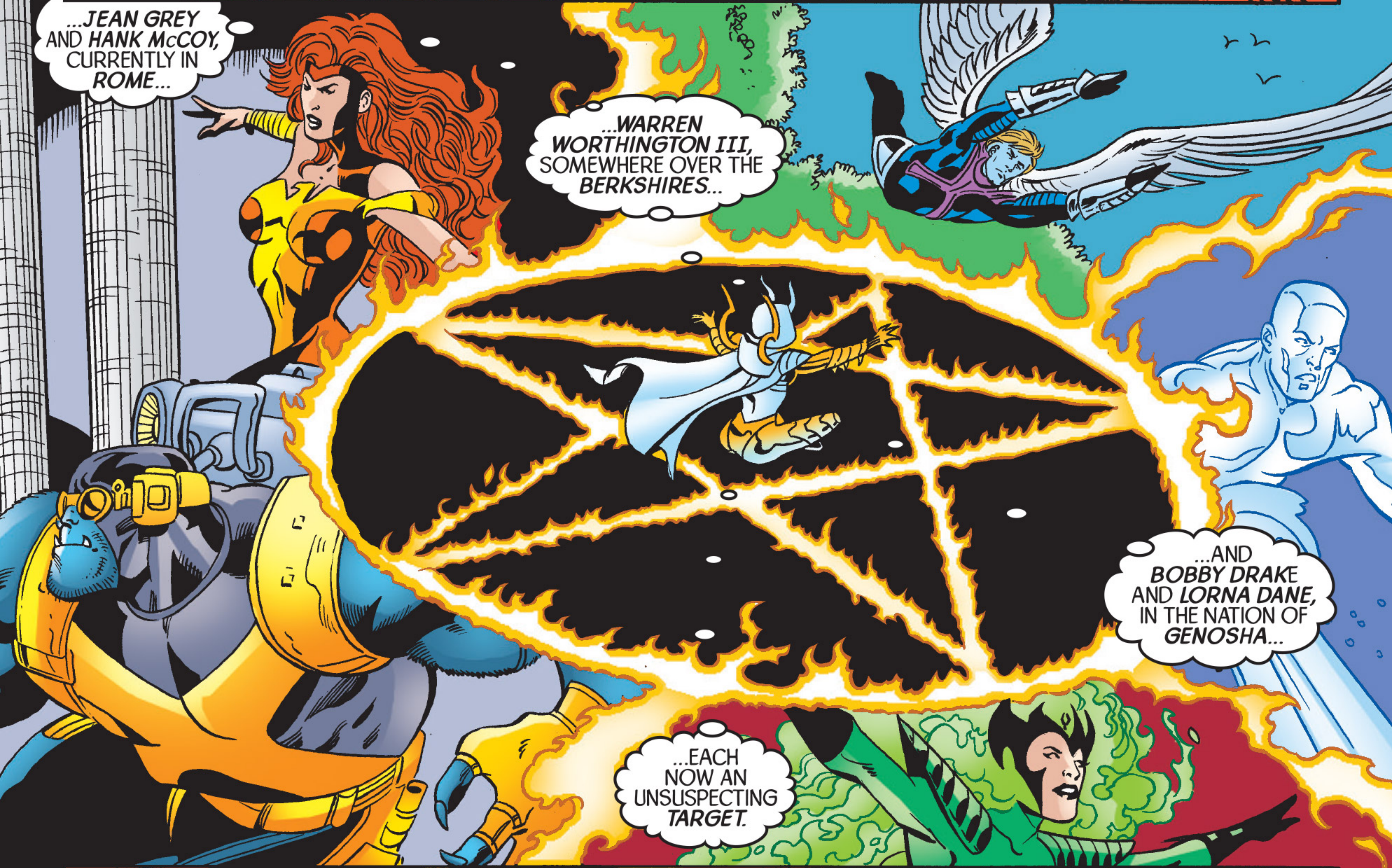
NOT JUST YOU, KITTY.
WE ARE BOTH OF US SERVANTS OF FORCES FAR BEYOND OUR CONTROL.
WHILE THE N'GARAI SEEK TO CONQUER EARTH, BELASCO'S ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO SEIZE LIMBO, THE PORTAL TO ALL OF CREATION --
-- AND USE THIS REALM AS HIS BASE FROM WHICH TO DOMINATE THE ENTIRE OMNIVERSE.
HE HAS TO BE STOPPED.
WORKS FOR ME. WHEN DO WE START?
IT'S NOT AS SIMPLE AS THAT.
BELASCO HAS YOUR SOUL, REMEMBER? YOU CAN NO LONGER EXIST ON EARTH --
-- AND THE LONGER YOU REMAIN HERE, THE MORE YOU'LL FALL UNDER HIS SWAY.
SO BASICALLY, YOU'RE TELLING ME I'M IN DEEP?
NO, THERE IS ONE CHANCE, BUT IT ENTAILS A FEARFUL RISK.
YOUR CORPOREAL FORM CAN BE ABSORBED INTO MY SWORD -- UNTIL YOUR SOUL CAN BE RETURNED TO YOU.
AND THE DOWNSIDE?
YOU COULD REMAIN TRAPPED IN THE SWORD FOR ALL ETERNITY.
IT'S NEVER EASY, IS IT?
WILL THIS HURT?
YOU HAVE ALREADY SUFFERED ENOUGH.
SLEEP WELL, SWEET SISTER.
BY MY OWN SOUL, I SWEAR --
-- MAGIK SHALL NOT FAIL YOU!

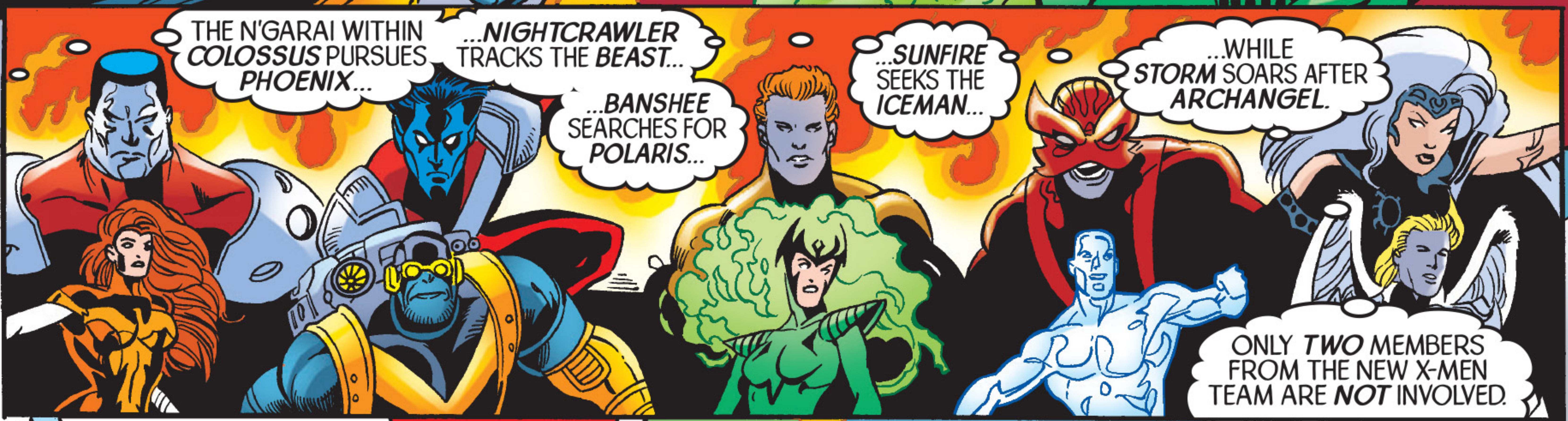
HOW VERY *MELODRAMATIC,* DEAR GIRL...
...SURELY YOU DID NOT LEARN THAT WHILE APPRENTICED TO *ME?*
I THOUGHT I'D TAUGHT YOU *BETTER* THAN --
-AAGGHH!
SHRAKT
JUST STOP TALKING AND *DIE* ALREADY, WOULD YOU?
WELL *STRUCK.*
HAD THIS BEEN MY *TRUE* BODY RATHER THAN A MERE *PROJECTION,* THAT MIGHT HAVE DONE SOME *DAMAGE.*
EVER THE *COWARD,* eh, BELASCO?
NO, MERELY *PRUDENT.*
MY NEW *ALLIES* POSSESS POWER BEYOND COMPREHENSION --
-- AND ONCE THE FIVE *BLOODSTONES* HAVE BEEN FORGED FROM THE SOULS OF THE X-MEN --
-- NO POWER IN EXISTENCE CAN PREVENT THE TRUE *N'GARAI* FROM SWEEPING THROUGH LIMBO AND ONWARD TO *EARTH.*
BEHOLD, CHILD, THE SHAPE OF YOUR *WORLD* TO COME!
AND, BY ALL MEANS, PLEASE DO TRY TO *RESIST* US!
THE FIERCER THE *FIGHT,* THE SWEETER THE *TRIUMPH!*

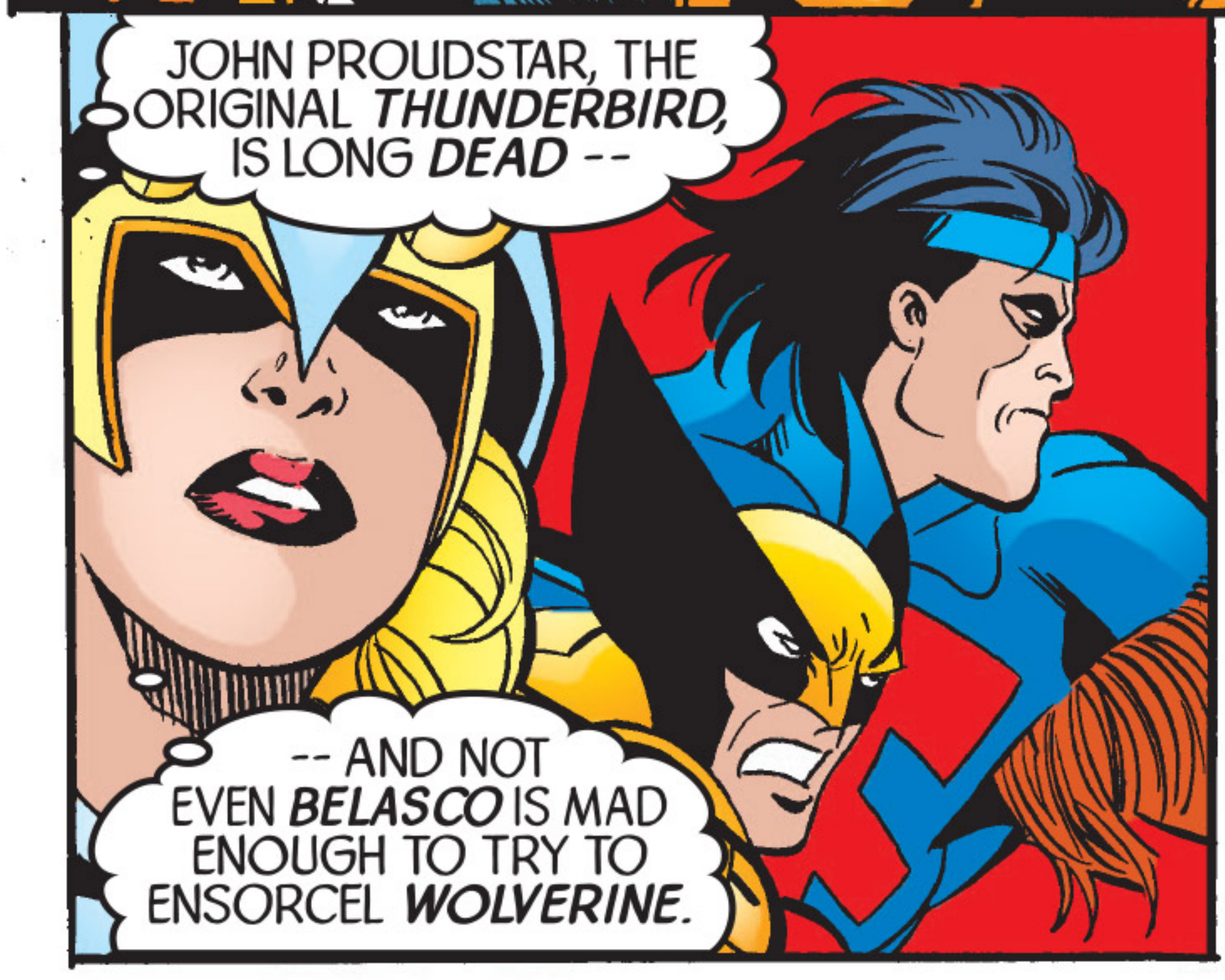
THE UNIVERSE SHIMMERS, THEN RECREATES ITSELF --
-- TAKING ON THE VISAGE OF A NIGHTMARE --
--A WORLD AWASH IN CARNAGE --
-- A MONUMENT TO MADNESS!
FOR A SEEMING ETERNITY, THE WOMAN KNOWN AS MAGIK STANDS ATOP THE MOUNTAIN OF SKULLS --
-- SURVEYING THE UNHOLY DEVASTATION ALL AROUND HER --
NOOOO!
-- THEN, WITH A HOWL, LIKE THE PROTEST OF A PLANET, SHE RAISES HER ENCHANTED WEAPON --
-- AND STRIKES BACK IN HUMANITY'S NAME!
IN A BLINDING FLASH OF MYSTIC LUMINESCENCE, THE WORLD IS SWEPT CLEAN AGAIN --
-- BUT THE BLOOD-CHILLING MEMORY REMAINS!
ALL RIGHT, BELASCO -- IF YOU WANT A FIGHT, YOU'VE GOT ONE!
AND THAT'S A MISTAKE YOU WILL NOT LIVE TO REGRET!

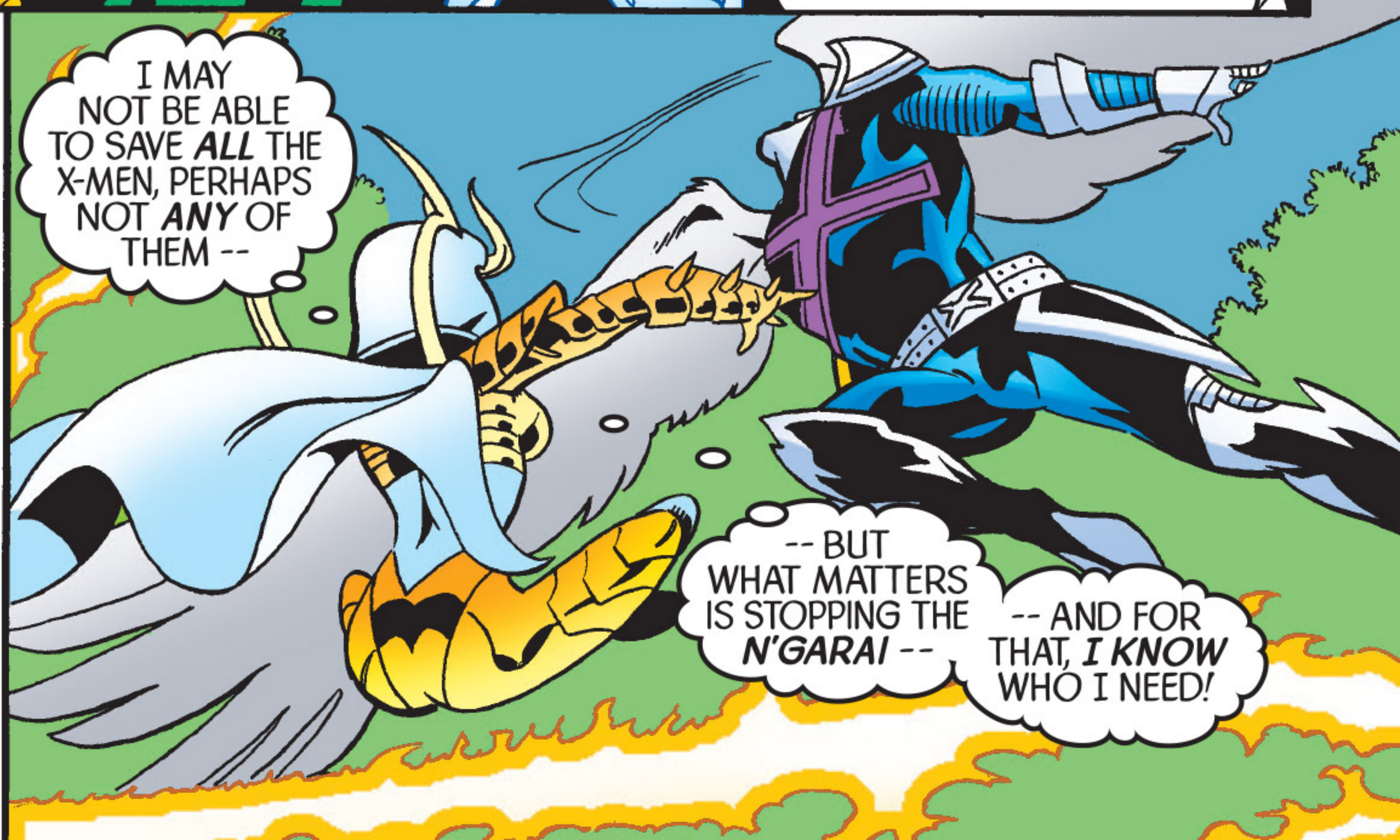
HONG KONG:
MUCH HAS CHANGED HERE SINCE THE CHINESE REPATRIATION --
-- BUT THE SQUALOR IN LOWTOWN, THE OVERWHELMING MISERY, THE VIOLENT CRIME...
...SADLY, THOSE THINGS NEVER CHANGE.
DOES NO ELEVATOR WORK IN THIS CITY?
A LITTLE EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOU, DETECTIVE.
THE CRIME SCENE?
IN THERE, COLONEL WEI.
MY GOD! WHAT SORT OF LUNATIC IS LOOSE IN THIS CITY?
WITH THE BODIES HERE, THAT BRINGS THE TOTAL DEAD TO 169.
OR 13 TIMES 13, THE NUMBER OF A GRAND COVEN, USED ONLY FOR THE MOST POWERFUL OF ARCANE RITES.
OR, IN THIS CASE, THE MOST FOUL.
COLONEL, I -- I DON'T UNDERSTAND --!
I DID ONLY WHAT I NEEDED TO DO...
...TO OPEN THE WAY FOR MY BROTHERS.
C-COLONEL WEI, Y-YOUR SHADOW --!
NO, DETECTIVE, NOT COLONEL WEI...
...MERELY A PILGRIMM!
A SECRET THAT YOU AND THE OTHERS OUTSIDE WILL CARRY TO YOUR GRAVES!


LIMBO: AS THE SORCERESS CALLED MAGIK GOES ABOUT HER DARK BUSINESS...
IT TOOK ALL MY ARCANE ENERGIES, BUT I'VE LEARNED WHAT BELASO'S POSSESSED CATSPAWS ARE AFTER...
...FIVE MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL X-MEN...


...JEAN GREY AND HANK McCOY, CURRENTLY IN ROME...
...WARREN WORTHINGTON III, SOMEWHERE OVER THE BERKSHIRES...
...AND BOBBY DRAKE AND LORNA DANE, IN THE NATION OF GENOSHA...
...EACH NOW AN UNSUSPECTING TARGET.


THE N'GARAI WITHIN COLOSSUS PURSUES PHOENIX...
...NIGHTCRAWLER TRACKS THE BEAST...
...BANSHEE SEARCHES FOR POLARIS...
...SUNFIRE SEEKS THE ICEMAN...
...WHILE STORM SOARS AFTER ARCHANGEL.
ONLY TWO MEMBERS FROM THE NEW X-MEN TEAM ARE NOT INVOLVED.


JOHN PROUDSTAR, THE ORIGINAL THUNDERBIRD, IS LONG DEAD --
-- AND NOT EVEN BELASCO IS MAD ENOUGH TO TRY TO ENSORCEL WOLVERINE.


I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SAVE ALL THE X-MEN, PERHAPS NOT ANY OF THEM --
-- BUT WHAT MATTERS IS STOPPING THE N'GARAI --
-- AND FOR THAT, I KNOW WHO I NEED!

CONNECTICUT:
HIGH OVER THE ROLLING HILLS OF THE BEAUTIFUL BERKSHIRE MOUNTAINS SOARS A FIGURE MORE **GRACEFUL** THAN THE FEATHERED **FOWL** HE APPEARS TO EMULATE.
AS ALREADY NOTED, HIS NAME IS **WARREN WORTHINGTON III**. HE IS ONE OF THE **ORIGINAL** X-MEN, CODE-NAME: **ARCHANGEL** --
-- THOUGH, AT THE MOMENT, HE IS MORE LIKE A **BIRD OF PREY!**
HIS **QUARRY?**
THE COUPLE IN THE SLEEK **FERRARI DAYTONA** HUGGING THE WINDING COUNTRY ROAD BELOW HIM.
THE DRIVER IS **NEAL SHAARA,** THE **NEWEST** X-MAN, LATEST TO BEAR THE NAME **THUNDERBIRD** --
-- WHILE HIS PASSENGER IS **BETSY BRADDOCK,** THE TELEKINETIC MUTANT KNOWN AS **PSYLOCKE**.
AND THOUGH NEITHER IS FULLY **AWARE** OF IT YET --
WELCOME TO STARKESBORO
Where Yesterday Becomes Tomorrow
RADIANCE LUMINOLOGY
-- THEY ARE IN FOR THE RIDE OF THEIR **LIVES!**
RADIANCE LUMINOLOGY:
HIDDEN IN A SECLUDED **CUL-DE-SAC** WELL OFF THE BEATEN PATH, IT IS ALL BUT **INVISIBLE** TO THE CASUAL OBSERVER --
-- WHICH IS PROBABLY QUITE **FORTUNATE** --
-- CONSIDERING THE SINISTER **SECRETS** IT HIDES.
DON'T KNOW WHY WE'RE WASTING OUR TIME **WATCHING** THIS THING --
-- FREAK HASN'T **MOVED** SINCE THE BLACK OPS BOYS **BROUGHT** IT HERE.
In X-MEN #75. -- M

WHICH IS INDEED TRUE --
-- FOR THE INTERDIMENSIONAL LIFEFORM CALLED THE RU'TAI HAS HAD NO REASON TO MOVE --
--UNTIL NOW!
THE N'GARAI CAIRN SIMPLY POPS INTO EXISTENCE --
-- AND THE ONCE-DORMANT RU'TAI ABRUPTLY GOES WILD!
HSSS
AT LAST!
SHRAKT
NO LONGER MUST I SIT STILL AND ENDURE SUCH INDIGNITY!
THE MOMENT HAS COME TO STRIKE BACK!
CODE RED!
MAXIMUM LOCKDOWN -- NOW!
WE'RE ON IT!
WITHOUT HESITATION, THE RU'TAI HURLS ITSELF ON THE CAIRN --
HSSSAAAA
-- BRUTALLY IMPALING ITSELF --
-- AND THUS UNLEASHING CHAOS!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
CAN'T SEE --!
WHAT'D THAT FREAK DO TO --
HEY, WHERE'D IT GO?
AND WHO IN BLAZES IS THAT?!
TALK, MISTER! WHO ARE YOU?
HOW'D YOU GET IN HERE?
I AM CALLED... PILGRIMM!
SADLY, THAT IS THE LAST THING YOU'LL EVER LIVE TO LEARN.
BHUD-UD-UD-AH
EEEIII!
BLAM BLAM
AGGGHH!

SEVERAL MILES AWAY, UNAWARE OF THE CARNAGE BEING WROUGHT BEHIND THEM, NEAL AND BETSY PUSH THE PEDAL TO THE METAL --
-- LOST IN THE SHEER EXHILARATION OF THE RIDE --
VROOOOOM
-- UNTIL:
EH?
DANGER --?!?
REACTING ALMOST WITHOUT THINKING, NEAL CUTS THE WHEEL HARD, AS...
SKREEEEEE
SMOOTH MOVE, HOTSHOT!
DON'T KNOW WHAT I MAY HAVE DONE TO OFFEND YOU, ARCHANGEL --
-- BUT THERE'S NO WAY I'M LETTING YOU TOUCH ME UNTIL I FIND OUT!
CUTE... A DEFENSIVE PLASMA SHIELD!
YOU'RE A QUICK LEARNER, KID.
GOTTA GIVE YOU THAT MUCH.
BUT YOU'RE STILL PLAYING WAY OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE!
WARREN, WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
STOP THIS INSANITY --
-- AND I DO MEAN NOW!
UHHNN!
NO! PSI-BLAST HIT HIM HARDER THAN I INTENDED --!
NO SWEAT, BETSY!
I'VE GOT HIM!
DID I ASK FOR YOUR HELP?

WILL YOU TWO KINDLY *STUFF A SOCK* IN IT?
DON'T MAKE ME COME *OVER* THERE!
HEY, I DIDN'T *START* THIS, BETSY --
-- BUT I'LL BE GLAD TO *FINISH* IT!
NO, YOU'RE *RIGHT*. THIS ISN'T ABOUT *YOU!*
IT'S BETWEEN *BETSY* AND ME!
WHAT IN MERCY'S NAME ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT?
I THOUGHT WE HAD SOMETHING *SPECIAL* BETWEEN US --
-- BUT THE FIRST TIME I TURN MY *BACK* --
-- YOU'RE OFF HITTING EVERY *HOT SPOT* IN TOWN WITH THE *NEWBIE!*
THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?
HOW *DARE* YOU?!
I DON'T APPRECIATE THE ADOLESCENT *JEALOUSY,* WORTHINGTON!
I'D HAVE THOUGHT THE *LEAST* I'D EARNED BY NOW IS YOUR *TRUST,* IF NOT YOUR --
AH, FORGIVE THE *INTERRUPTION,* BUT --
SHUT UP!
RIGHT.
JUST THOUGHT YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN THE *GUNFIRE* I HEARD COMING FROM --
-- huh?!
QUICKLY, *TAKE COVER* BEFORE IT'S --

"-- TOO LATE!"
IT IS FOUND! IT IS OURS!
WHILE THE SPIRIT IS CURRENTLY THAT OF A N'GARAI DEMON, THE BODY BELONGS TO ORORO MUNROE, THE X-MEN TEAM LEADER CALLED STORM, DUE TO HER ABSOLUTE MASTERY OF THE ELEMENTS!
UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, SHE IS AN OPPONENT TO BE WARY OF, AN OPPONENT TO BE FEARED --
-- AND THIS IS FAR FROM THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES!
STORM, HAVE YOU GONE MAD?

THE WEATHER-WITCH DOES NOT ANSWER --
-- BUT HER ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS!
THE IMPACT SENDS THUNDERBIRD CAREENING INTO MAGIK --
-- AND KNOCKS PSYLOCKE COMPLETELY OUT OF THE ACTION!
UNNH!
ONLY ARCHANGEL MANAGES TO EVADE THE ASSAULT --
-- AND EVEN THEN ONLY FOR A MOMENT!
CAN'T RESIST HER WINDSTORM --
-- SO I MIGHT AS WELL LET IT WORK FOR ME --!
THIS IS AN OLD FOREST --
-- LOTS OF HEAVY GROWTH --
-- LOTS OF COVERAGE --!
FOLIAGE IS TOO DENSE FOR STORM TO GET A DECENT SHOT AT ME IN HERE --
-- BUT SHE, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAKES FOR ONE REALLY EASY TARGET!

WHILE, ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE HILL...
I WAS TOO LATE... AGAIN.
GOT TO LEARN BETTER CONTROL OF THE STEPPING DISKS BEFORE --
THIS... IS YOUR FAULT SOMEHOW...
...DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO STORM --
-- BUT YOU'VE GOT THREE SECONDS TO RESTORE HER TO NORMAL BEFORE I TAKE YOU APART!
WHAT --?!
FOOL!
DID YOU TRULY THINK TO CATCH ME UNAWARE?
HUNNFF!
I'LL CATCH YOU ANY WAY I CAN, SISTER!
NOW CHANGE STORM BACK TO NORMAL!
YOU IDIOT, I WASN'T AIMING AT YOU --
THEN WHO --?!
HOW ABOUT THE MONSTER STANDING BEHIND YOU?
UNNFF!
BROK

NO, IT IS **WRONG.** I'M NOT A **MONSTER.** I AM... **PILGRIMM!**
CALL YOURSELF WHAT YOU ***WILL,*** UGLY --
-- YOU STILL WON'T TAKE US DOWN WITHOUT A ***FIGHT!***
IT **MISUNDERSTANDS!**
I WILL NOT **FIGHT** YOU!
Eh?
IN FACT, I HAVE NO **INTEREST** AT ALL IN SUCH AS **YOU!**
IT JUMPED-- CLEAN ***OVER*** US -- ***IGNORED*** US!
ITS TARGET MUST BE ONE OF THE ***OTHERS!***
COME ON! WE'VE GOT TO ***WARN*** THEM!
HEY, ***WHAT*** --?!
AND THIS TIME ***I PRAY*** I'M NOT ***TOO LATE!***

NEARBY:
WHERE ARE YOU, PREY?
YOU CANNOT EVADE US FOR--
-- EH? SOMETHING MOVES BELOW--!
TZAKT
FAH! MERELY SOME MINDLESS BEAST--!
REVEAL YOURSELF, COWARD!
ACCEPT YOUR FATE AND BE DONE WITH IT!
RIGHT. LIKE THAT'S EVER GONNA HAPPEN.
DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH ORORO --
-- BUT SHE'S MOVING LIKE HER BODY, HER POWERS, ARE ALL NEW TO HER!
WHICH MEANS EITHER SHE'S AN IMPOSTOR --
-- OR SHE'S SOMEHOW BEEN POSSESSED!
EITHER WAY, I'VE GOT MY WORK CUT OUT FOR ME!
YOU MAY THINK YOURSELF SAFELY HIDDEN, PREY --
-- BUT MY WINDS WILL PART THE TREES TO REVEAL YOUR--
--NO!!
YOU ARE NOT THE ONE WE SEEK!
YOU ARE... RU'TAI!
AND YOU ARE NOW OUR PREY!

SORRY, UGLY -- CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT!
IF THAT BODY DOES BELONG TO STORM, I CAN'T LET ANY HARM COME TO IT!
THROK
UUNNF!
OUCH!
WELL, THAT OUGHT'A TAKE THE STING OUT OF HIS TAIL FOR A WHILE!
THROOOM
AND THIS SHOULD CLIP YOUR WINGS, PREY!
EVEN YOU CANNOT REMAIN ALOFT WITHOUT SUFFICIENT LIFT!
Huh?
HIS POWERFUL PINIONS BEATING AGAINST NOTHING, ARCHANGEL PLUMMETS TO EARTH --
FWHUMP
-- AND LIES STILL!
DEATHLY STILL.

YOU WERE WORTHY PREY--
--WE WILL GRANT YOU THAT MUCH--
-- BUT IN THE END, WE ARE DESTINED TO TRIUMPH!
WHUD
WANNA BET?
WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT STORM!
ORORO WOULD NEVER HAVE FALLEN FOR THE OLD "PLAYING POSSUM" GAG!
NO, IT IS N'GARAI -- WEARING THE BODY OF YOUR FRIEND!
BUT SOON, IT WILL BE NO MORE!
WE DO NOT FEAR YOU, RU'TAI!
YOU SHOULD!
TZAKT
NEVER! ONCE THE N'GARAI ENSLAVED YOUR RACE!
NEXT TIME, WE WILL DESTROY YOU!
MONSOON RAINS -- TURNING THE GROUND TO MUCK!
SOIL TOO SLICK --!
CANNOT MAINTAIN MY FOOTING --!
WE WILL DEAL WITH YOU SHORTLY, RU'TAI!
FIRST WE MUST FINISH WHAT WE CAME TO--
--NO!!

THE PREY--!
IT HAS VANISHED!
NOT IN THE SKY--!
THEN WHERE--?
THE UNDER-BRUSH--!
SOMETHING MOVING--!
SO SWIFT I CANNOT GET A FIX ON IT--!
SHOW YOURSELF, PREY!
FACE US!
WELL, SINCE YOU ASK SO *SWEETLY* --!
WOK
HUNNH!
AND YOU, RU'TAI? DO YOU THINK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY MOMENTARY WEAKNESS?
UNNECESSARY AGAINST SUCH AS *YOU* --!
ENOUGH ALREADY! I'M SICK OF LISTENING TO *BOTH* OF YOU!
WHAT SAY YOU BOTH JUST *LAY* DOWN AND *STAY* DOWN?!
WHUDD
THUDD

BETWEEN THE RU'TAI AND THE PREY, THIS TAKES TOO LONG!
TIME THERE WAS AN END TO IT!
SUMMONING THE WEATHER-WARPING POWERS OF THE BODY IT POSSESSES, THE N'GARAI INCREASES THE MONSOON RAINS TO COVER THE ENTIRE AREA --
-- THEN ABRUPTLY DROPS THE LOCAL TEMPERATURE TO SUB-ZERO LEVELS --
-- CREATING A VERITABLE ICE STORM!
IN AN INSTANT, FROST ENCRUSTS THE SURROUNDING FOLIAGE, MAKING IT GLEAM LIKE DIAMONDS --
-- AS THE ENTIRE CREST OF THE RIDGE IS FLASH-FROZEN --
-- AND SO, IT APPEARS, ARE THE N'GARAI'S OPPONENTS!
HIS PINIONS ENCASED LIKE THE WINGS OF A STRICKEN AIRLINER, ARCHANGEL CRASHES TO THE EARTH AGAIN --
-- AND ONCE MORE LIES STUNNED, UNMOVING --
-- AND THIS TIME THE SMIRKING N'GARAI DOES NOT THINK THE X-MAN IS FAKING!

DON'T KNOW... WHAT YOU ... WANT WITH ME, ALIEN...
...BUT I WON'T GO DOWN... EASY...
YES YOU WILL, PREY --
-- OR THIS ONE WILL SUFFER IN YOUR PLACE!
B-BETSY...?
SURRENDER NOW OR--
--AARGH!
HUNNH!
BROK
BE THANKFUL I'VE NO MORE TIME TO WASTE, N'GARAI --
-- OR I WOULD PUT A PERMANENT END TO YOU!
GUESS I OUGHT'A THANK YOU FOR THE HELP, HUH?
INAPPROPRIATE, MEAT --
— SINCE I OFFER YOU THE SAME TRADE AS THE N'GARAI...
...YOUR LIFE FOR THIS ONE.
FAIR EXCHANGE.
CHOOSE NOW!
SKREEE
FWASHH
MIND IF I CHOOSE NONE OF THE ABOVE?

NICELY DONE, KID! I'VE GOT BETSY CLEAR!
TAKE THIS SUCKER OUT!
FOOLS! YOU'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TRULY UP AGAINST --
-- AND I'VE NO TIME LEFT TO TEACH YOU!
THIS BATTLE NOW APPEARS LOST --
WHAM
-- BUT I NEED ONLY WIN ONE OF THE REMAINING BATTLES TO WIN THE WAR!
THE CREATURE'S... GONE?!
ONLY ONE OF THEM! WE'VE STILL GOT TO DEAL WITH STORM BEFORE --
-- TOO LATE!
BY THE POWER OF THE CORRUPT ONE, I SUMMON FORTH --
--THE VERY SOUL OF THE ONE CALLED ARCHANGEL!
DONE!
AND THUS DOES THE FIRST OF THE FIVE BLOODSTONES BELONG TO THE N'GARAI!
NO!
NOT FOR LONG IT DOESN'T --!
THE N'GARAI'S PULLING A FAST FADEOUT!
WE ARE GONE, MEAT --
-- AND WITH US GOES ALL HOPE FOR YOUR PITIFUL WORLD!
HAHAHAHA

I'VE FAILED... AGAIN!
ARCHANGEL? WARREN?
HEY! YOU IN THERE, MAN?
HE'S SO COLD... BARELY BREATHING!
RESURRECTION IS A LITTLE OUT OF MY LEAGUE, SISTER!
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO FOR HIM? ANYTHING?
THERE'S ONE CHANCE -- THOUGH IT'S EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!
STILL, CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE IS NO OTHER CHOICE!
THEN GO FOR IT -- NOW!
AS YOU WISH.
ONCE AGAIN, THE WOMAN CALLED MAGIK CLUTCHES HER ENCHANTED SOULSWORD --
-- TOUCHING IT TO THE FALLEN ARCHANGEL'S CHEST --
-- AS SHE SOFTLY MUTTERS INCANTATIONS THAT WERE OLD WHEN THE WORLD WAS YOUNG --
-- THE GLOW THAT SURROUNDS THEM GROWS STRONGER --
-- SO BRIGHT THAT THOSE WHO BEAR WITNESS ARE FORCED FOR A MOMENT TO AVERT THEIR EYES --
-- AND WHEN THE LIGHT AT LAST FADES...
HE'S GONE!
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?
ONLY WHAT YOU ASKED OF ME.
THAT WHICH WAS NECESSARY.
AND MARK MY WORDS, THUNDERBIRD...
...BEFORE THIS IS ALL ENDED, IT'S VERY LIKELY I WILL HAVE TO DO FAR WORSE!
NEXT
SPELL the 3rd: BARE THE CLAWS!